

and we will see what he does. He was very cordial, nice and intelligent; and, of course, they have a President at the present time, a Kurd named Talabani.

We also were heartened by the progress women had made in Iraq, because at the present time every third name on the ballot last January 30 was a female name. So we will have about 80 representatives of the 275 member delegates to the constitutional convention.

So, all in all, Mr. Speaker, we think things are better. They are not perfect, but it is heartening to see the progress that has been made.

#### GUN LIABILITY LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I talked about no fly. In other words, terrorists in this country cannot get onto a plane, but they can certainly go into a gun store and be able to buy a gun. Today, I would like to talk about gun liability, which is going to be out on the floor in the next week or so.

The leadership of Congress is constantly preaching about personal responsibility: Individuals should accept the consequences of their actions. I agree with that. Unfortunately, this culture of responsibility does not extend to the gun industry and negligent gun sellers.

Both the Senate and the House have bills granting the gun industry unprecedented immunity from litigation and other legal actions, legal actions that many of us that have suffered from gun violence were able to take advantage of in the courts. Under this legislation, dealers and manufacturers of guns would receive immunity from any legal action.

Sellers and makers of nearly every other consumer product must face the consequences of their negligence and their misjudgments. Manufacturers and sellers of toy guns are more liable for their products than the makers and sellers of assault weapons and handguns.

The NRA has named this issue as their number one legislative priority this year. They said this will end frivolous lawsuits, but not a single suit against the gun industry has ever been deemed frivolous by a court of law.

This legislation is not about protecting an honest gun dealer who illegally sells a gun to someone who later commits a crime. This legislation protects cases of gross negligence which has led to the deaths of unsuspecting victims.

For example, I think the majority of us remember the incident here in the D.C. area. The owner of the Bull's Eye Shooter Supply Store in Washington State was sued because he could not account for 239 guns in his inventory.

One of these guns was the Bushmaster used in the D.C. sniper cases. The D.C. sniper killers were allowed to get their hands on a gun because of this store's negligence, but this legislation would get Bull's Eye Shooter Supply off the hook from any legal action. By the way, the victims were able to sue Bull's Eye and win a court judgment.

Fortunately, there was a lawsuit against Bull's Eye and Bushmaster, and part of the settlement was Bushmaster agreeing to work with its dealer to promote safer sales practices to prevent incidents of negligence. That is one of the tools of being allowed to sue, to make manufacturers, to make people responsible for their products.

This legislation would have required the immediate dismissal of the lawsuit against Bull's Eye.

The gun industry must be subject to the same laws that govern every other American business. Courthouse doors must remain open to those injured or who have lost loved ones because of the gun industry's negligence.

This bill would allow gun dealers to knowingly sell large quantity of guns to a single customer intending to traffic the guns to criminals without any legal repercussions.

Stripping away the threat of legal action would seriously jeopardize any opportunity to make guns safer. Without the threat of lawsuits, the gun industry will not have any incentives to incorporate gun locks, safety triggers and smart gun technology into their products. Had this law been in place 40 years ago, the auto industry certainly would not have made the cars we are driving any safer than what we are in today.

Instead of giving the gun industry never-before levels of protection, I support giving the gun industry Federal research and development money. This money would be used to develop reasonable safety measures for their products.

But Congress has not been responding to the threat of gun violence. Let me speak in a language the Congress leadership understands, dollars and cents.

The secret that most people do not understand is the gun violence in this country is costing millions and billions of dollars. People do not understand that the Centers for Disease Control at one time was able to study the economical impact of gun violence in this country. By an act here in Congress we are not allowed to do that anymore, so that data does not come out.

Years ago, independent studies have shown gun violence costs our health care system over \$100 billion every single year, \$100 billion. The \$100 billion a year cost includes premiums paid for private health insurance and tax dollars used to pay for Medicaid, Medicaid in our States that are having such a hard time, Medicaid that is going to be cut here in the House and the Senate. These costs often are not reimbursed and cost the States vital health care money.

Victims who survive suffer years of rehabilitation costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. My son was injured 11 years ago and is still going under physical therapy to be able to keep what he has.

The average cost of each firearm fatality, including medical care, police services and lost productivity is almost \$1 million a year. This Nation has to start looking at the gun violence. We can do this without the right of gun owners being taken away. Wake up, America.

#### TRADE IS THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, first, let me express my appreciation to my friend the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to join with my colleagues, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS), the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) to meet with leaders in the European Union and the European Commission. One of the things that I found from meeting with them and from discussions that I had with our great ambassador to the European Union, Rockwell Schnabel, is that trade is obviously the wave of the future.

We have one of the most important trade relationships between the 25 member European Union and the United States of America on the face of the earth. In fact, trade between the EU and the United States is just short of \$1 trillion a year. It is \$966 billion, in fact, last year.

I think it is important for us to note that we have dealt with more than a few problems with the European Union. We have lots of great challenges, and I happen to believe that one of the best ways to deal with those challenges is for us to enhance that trade relationship.

We are in the midst of discussing the establishment of our first bilateral trade agreement in a long period of time as we in the not-too-distant future are going to be addressing the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which will include the Dominican Republic. As my colleagues know, Mr. Speaker, we have put together a wide range of bilateral agreements over the past several years.

I today met with the ambassador from the United Arab Emirates, one of our great allies in the global war on terror, and we hope very much we are going to be able to put together a free trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates.

I think it is also important for us to note that in dealing with the European